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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5204
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
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UNCLAS NIAMEY 000536

DEPT FOR AF/W AND AF/RSA
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [SOCI](#) [NG](#)
SUBJECT: Niger: Court Rules Union Strike Illegal, GON Bans
Opposition Rally; First Lady Plans July 25 Rally

Ref: a) Niamey 522 b) Niamey 521 c) Niamey 520 d) Niamey 479
e) Niamey 225

¶1. On July 20, the Inter-Union of Niger's Workers (ITN), made up of seven labor confederations, notified the government of its intention to go on strike on July 23-24 to demand a 10% salary increase and press President Tandja to repeal his referendum plan. On July 22, the Government of Niger (GON) lodged a complaint before the Tribunal of Niamey, requesting that the court ban the strike. The Tribunal delivered a judgment in chambers the same day, declaring the projected strike illegal. That evening, state television announced the court ruling during its newscast. On July 23, Minister of Communication and Government Spokesperson Mohamed Ben Omar told a foreign radio station that the strike was "not consistent with Niger's workers' platform. Their claims were clearly political." Labor union leaders, who did not have time to call off the strike, met on July 23 to decide on a course of action. Mission observers did not detect evidence that a strike occurred.

¶2. The Coordination of Forces for Democracy and the Republic (CFDR), the newly-formed coalition of opposition political parties, civil society organizations, and labor unions, announced a peaceful demonstration to take place on July 26. On July 23, the Mayor of Niamey Commune III notified the CFDR that "due to the current social climate" authorities could not authorize the rally.

¶3. Sanoussi Jackou, President of the opposition Nigerien Party for Self-Reliance (PNA), a member of the CFDR coalition, reacted to the ban. He stated on a private radio broadcast that the CFDR, "Could not understand this attitude. It is curious that the government continues to stage rallies, marches, and other radio and television statements in its favor, but it bans our peaceful events. This is not a good omen for our democracy. Fascism is lurking."

¶4. On July 23, first First Lady Laraba Tandja invited all women and youth from the Alliance of Forces for Democracy and the Republic (AFDR - the ruling coalition) to a rally at the "Maison des Jeunes Diado Sekou" in Niamey on July 25 in support of President Tandja's referendum plan. Authorities apparently have authorized this gathering.

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